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Heavy snow brings traffic to slow crawl

DELAYS Vancouver police closed several major hills in the city to traffic yesterday as heavy snow continued to pound the South Coast.

Drivers were advised to stay off the road unless absolutely necessary, said Const. Jana McGuinness. Police vehicles were equipped with chains and sandbags, she added.

In Vancouver, ice and packed snow delayed bus service along West Broadway, said Drew Snider, a TransLink spokesman. Overhead trolley wires came down at Granville Street and Broadway causing delays.

SkyTrain ran "ghost trains" through the night to keep the tracks clear of snow.

At press time, snowfall was expected to dwindle overnight to isolated flurries this morning. Sunny skies and temperatures of about 0 C are predicted for this afternoon.

METRO VANCOUVER

Seasonal Depression

When holidays aren't so merry
First of a two-part series, pg 4

Celebrity Buzz pg 22

Vaughn exiting bachelorhood?

Comment pg 10

Fund transit to boost economy

Please recycle

School gym city shelter?

Cab firm 'happy to help' with homeless transportation

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

City councillors plan to transform a Westside high school gym into a temporary emergency shelter and are approaching taxi companies to help transport homeless people to city shelters.

Word of the initiatives follows Friday's death of a homeless woman who burned to death while trying to keep warm sleeping on Vancouver's frozen city streets.

Vision Coun. Kerry Jang said Mayor Gregor Robertson, Coun. Andrea Reimer and himself have been in talks with the city's superintendent of schools over the possibility of converting the Kitsilano Secondary gymnasium into a shelter. It would house between 30 to 100 people over the winter break.

"We've tried to place homeless shelters where people actually live," said Jang, adding that councillors have already created about 300 shelter spaces.

"That's why we're looking to Kitsilano, because it's the one spot where there's a good population of homeless folk who don't have any kind of shelter at all. It's always been lacking and it's one of the least served areas in the city."

For the shelter to open, a number of pieces still have to fall into place, Jang said, among them: Identifying legal issues, having properly trained outreach staff and having unionized janitorial staff keep the boilers running through the holidays.

The shelter, if it opens, would shut down two days before school reopens for classes in January.

In addition, Jang said, councillors are in talks with cab companies and hope to transport homeless people with carts and pets to shelters in wheelchair-accessible taxis.

Amrik Mahil, president of Black Top and Checker Cabs, said the initiative sounds like a good cause.

"We'd be happy to help," Mahil said. "If the council asks us to do that we'll be more than happy to help."

HOMELESS WOMAN DIES PG 3

Mental health advocate

- In January, Coun. Kerry Jang plans to introduce a motion to create a mental health advocate to co-ordinate mental health programs in the city.
- The advocate would tell providers what services are needed and where. They would also act as a watchdog to identify areas of poor service and to help create new mental health services in the city.

ShareYourViews
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KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Megan Beetstra heats snow to wash dishes yesterday after the pipes in her Vancouver home froze.

Iced pipes put folks in pioneer mode

KRISTEN THOMPSON
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When Megan Beetstra came home from Christmas shopping, she said the last thing she expected was to find the pipes in her house frozen.

"I thought, 'You've got to be kidding me,'" Beetstra said yesterday. "I kind of panicked and called my brother and said … 'What do I do?'"

Beetstra is one of many Lower Mainlanders dealing with frozen pipes, thanks to the recent onslaught of subzero temperatures.

She said she felt like a "pioneer woman" boiling snow on the stove to wash dishes, and is "crossing her fingers" the pipes don't burst while she's gone for Christmas.

Devon Goodsell, who lives in North Vancouver, found herself in the same predicament on Friday, and still has no water in her kitchen and laundry room.

"When (my fiancé) first told me the pipes were frozen, I burst out laughing," Goodsell said. "We live in Vancouver, this (couldn't) be possible."

She said she's run out of dishes and is going to wash them in the bathtub.

"Not only is it a huge inconvenience, but I'm worried (the pipes) are going to burst. How am I going to do Christmas? I can't cook if I don't have water."

"When (my fiancé) first told me the pipes were frozen, I burst out laughing. We live in Vancouver, this (couldn't) be possible."
Devon Goodsell

Leonard Ryan, a plumber with Vancouver's Plumbing Connection Inc., said he's had about 30 calls a day for the past few days from homeowners with frozen pipes.

"I can't come out (to them) because I'm too busy," he said, adding that before this weekend he hadn't had to deal with frozen pipes in the city in roughly 15 years.

Ryan said people should do anything to warm the pipes, either by raising the thermostat, keeping closets and cupboards open so warm air can reach the pipes, or putting space heaters near them. Running the tap at a trickle also helps.

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Electronic Arts closing downtown studio
Video-game giant Electronic Arts is closing its Black Box studio in downtown Vancouver, and also said more layoffs are planned. Operations for EA Black Box will be moved to the company's EA Canada studio in Burnaby. **CBC.CA/BC**

Local

Planes rerouted to Vancouver

Yesterday's heavy snowfall forced several flights scheduled to arrive at the Abbotsford International Airport to be redirected to Vancouver International Airport. A shuttle bus was then offered to people who had to return to Abbotsford, but it was slow going due to poor driving conditions. NEWS1130.COM

BT BREAKFAST TELEVISION weekdays at 6 | Citytv ROGERS

News in brief

ZOO Some of the animals at the Greater Vancouver Zoo are having a tough time coping with the unseasonably cold weather, news1130.com reported. Zoo spokesperson Jody Henderson said the Arctic animals are happy, but the animals from tropical climates have to be kept inside.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

metronews.ca
WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video Vancouver's Olympic mascots are proving to be recession-proof at **metronews.ca/canada**

Comment Guidy Mamman praises the "effortless peace" of Canadian multiculturalism at **metronews. ca/immigration**

Lotteries

Friday, Dec. 19 Lotto Super 7: 2, 16, 17, 21, 23, 36 & 45 Bonus 22 **Extra:** 3, 35, 79, 88
Saturday, Dec. 20 Lotto 6/49: 4, 7, 8, 10, 47 & 48 Bonus 6 **BC 49:** 3, 8, 11, 12, 21 & 35 Bonus 6 **Extra:** 38, 49, 61, 89
These results are not official.

Homeless woman dies in fire

Police say candle flame led to burning death inside cart

JEFF HODSON
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For the second time in a year, a homeless person has burned to death trying to keep warm in frigid winter weather on Vancouver's streets.

On Friday morning, a 47-year-old homeless woman named Tracey died when the cart she was sheltering in caught fire from a candle that she was using for warmth.

Temperatures dropped that night to about -10 C, said Vancouver Police Const. Jana McGuinness. Police officers had checked on Tracey three times that night and had offered shelter, which she refused.

"The officer that checked her last had a conversation with her," McGuinness said in a release. "(He) offered her a small comfort in the form of a cigarette and lent her his lighter when she asked to borrow it to light a candle."

According to police, the woman came to Vancouver from Abbotsford, where she had lived on the streets for a number of years.

In January, a homeless man named Darrell Mickasko died in Kitsilano when his clothing caught fire from a portable camping stove.

Mayor Gregor Robertson, who cited Mickasko's death as his reason for running in February when he announced he was seeking the Vision Vancouver nomination, said he is working to remove barriers to shelters for people with carts or pets.

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

A man walks his dog past a charred wall on Davie Street at Hornby Street yesterday, where a 47-year-old homeless woman died trying to keep warm Friday.

Elderly woman found frozen in backyard

FATALITY The frozen body of an elderly woman was discovered in the backyard of her Abbotsford home.

Police said the woman, who lived on Marshall Road, had been dead for a while, but they did not know when exactly she died, cknw.com reported.

Her body was discovered by a neighbour at about 1:30 p.m. Saturday.

Other media reports suggested the woman had dementia and a heart condition.

Her name has not yet been released because police are trying to notify her family. METRO VANCOUVER

News in brief

FESTIVAL Due to the heavy snowfall, VanDusen Botanical Garden was forced to cancel last night's Festival of Lights, news1130.com reported. The show is expected to reopen tonight for its regular hours between 4:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Olympic sneak peak
American TV viewers will get a look forward at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver on Saturday as part of an NBC broadcast that relives the Beijing Olympics. The two-hour prime time special, The Beijing Olympic Opening Ceremony: TV Event of the Year, will be hosted by Bob Costas and Matt Lauer. **REUTERS**

Holidays not always joyful

KRISTEN THOMPSON
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JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Arto Tienaho, who has battled depression and anxiety throughout his life, is shown outside his New Westminster home. Tienaho said the pressure to have fun during the holidays can compound feelings of anxiety.

METRO FEATURE
Seasonal Depression

The high-energy Christmas carols and TV ads tell us the upcoming holidays are a time to be merry, but for anxious or depressed people the pressure to be joyous can compound — not alleviate — their feelings.

Arto Tienaho said he suffered for much of his life from anxiety and depression — two different disorders that are often diagnosed together.

"(During the holidays) there's a sort of pressure that you're supposed to have fun, and if you're not, it exacerbates the condition," he said.

He described anxiety as walking around with a perpetual perception of fear.

"It's the same feeling you get when you're driving on the highway and there's a semi right behind you."

During the winter, the early nightfall and drizzly Vancouver weather intensify the problem, said Dr. Connie Coniglio, the director of health literacy for B.C. Mental Health and Addiction Services (PHSA).

"Despite all the marketing that suggest the holidays are supposed to be such a wonderful time, a lot of people experience stress (regarding) finances, family relationships, loneliness, grief and loss."

She said the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) has many free services to help people cope with depression and anxiety.

HereToHelp.bc.ca, for example, offers evidence-based, user-friendly information on mental health issues.

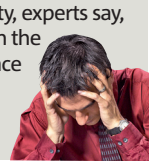
The PHSA also launched the Kelty Resource Centre this year, a virtual resource centre linking families dealing with mental health and substance abuse disorders to information and services.

Tienaho, who has his disorders under control and is now a manager at AnxietyBC, said it took years of trial-and-error to find respite.

"Education is a really important tool," he said, adding that little things like getting exercise and keeping a list of goals for the holiday help.

"Keep it simple," he said. "Socialize with people that are positive influences in your life. And realize that you're not the only one … feeling down over this time."

Tuesday's Metro
Meltdown
The global economic meltdown and its effects on our workplaces are resulting in added stress as 2008 comes to an end. There are ways to alleviate that anxiety, experts say, and get through the layoffs, workplace instability and fears of what 2009 will bring.



Depression and sleep disorders connected

JENNIFER TAPLIN
for Metro Canada

The night seems endless when you suffer from depression.

"We know from sleep research studies depressed people have trouble falling asleep and staying asleep," said Rachel Morehouse, a psychiatrist who is an expert in sleep disorders and circadian rhythms at Dalhousie University in Halifax.

So it's hard to sleep, but what do you do about it?

Morehouse said the first thing is deal with the underlying problem, which is the depression. She suggested starting with the doctor.

"It's something we can treat, so why suffer?"

"We know from sleep research studies depressed people have trouble falling asleep and staying asleep."
Rachel Morehouse, psychiatrist

And don't become a night owl. It might seem easier to stay up late and sleep in, but it's not a good idea, Morehouse said. "Their sleep schedules go right off the rails."

Keep your regular sleep-wake schedule and make your sleep environment as pleasant as possible. Take out the distractions like the TV and make it relaxing.

Alcohol and pot might help you fall asleep, but it won't keep you there, and intoxicants don't give you restorative sleep, Morehouse said. She also suggests insomniacs should eat properly, go for walks, and meet with friends to help with the blues.

3 walk away from weekend crash

AIRCRAFT Police say three people are lucky to have walked away unhurt from a plane crash near Pemberton.

RCMP Sgt. Blake Macleod said the light plane went down near the Terra Rosa glacier in Garibaldi Provincial Park early Saturday evening.

"Another aircraft in the area was able to make contact with the downed plane and determined that there were no injuries, and the three people on board had adequate survival gear," Macleod said.

The occupants of the plane were rescued. The crash is under investigation.

METRO VANCOUVER

News in brief

SKI LIFT The upper portion of Whistler's Excalibur gondola has reopened after Tower 4 burst and split in two last week. All ski-lift operators in B.C. have also been asked to check for ice or water damage.

BEAR SIGHTINGS Several bears have been spotted on the North Shore, according to The Ministry of the Environment, news1130.com reports. Food sources, such as exposed garbage and birdfeeders, seem to be tempting bears not to hibernate.

MISSING Police in Surrey are asking for public help in locating a missing autistic man who walked away from his group home. Robert Mascardo, 30, hasn't been seen since Saturday. RCMP said he doesn't speak to strangers and believe he might have taken a bus to the Guildford Exchange.

SMUGGLING A Vancouver man has been sentenced to 18 years in prison for his role in an international drug-smuggling ring. Yong Long Ye pleaded guilty to conspiracy to produce and export methamphetamine, traffic cocaine and launder the proceeds of crime. Several co-conspirators are also facing charges.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Fire claims lives of three children in Newfoundland

Three young children in Newfoundland were killed in a fire that destroyed a home on Bell Island, 35 kilometres west of St. John's, early Saturday. Five other people — three adults and two children — managed to get out of the burning house and were taken to hospital with injuries that weren't life-threatening. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

Canada

Man in hospital after being Tasered

A man from the central Newfoundland town of Sandringham who faces numerous charges was in critical condition yesterday after police used a Taser to subdue him during a violent confrontation. RCMP Sgt. Wayne Newell said the incident occurred Friday night when police received a call from occupants of a home who alleged a man with a knife was threatening them. While en route to the scene, the 29-year-old suspect himself called police, saying he had an axe and a shotgun, Newell alleged. CBC NEWS ONLINE

PM's auto adviser resigns

Industry leader Arnett leaves after 3 weeks on the job

Business leader Jim Arnett has resigned as special auto industry adviser to Prime Minister Stephen Harper after less than three weeks on the job, the Toronto Star has learned.

But provincial sources said Arnett, a former president and CEO of Molson Inc., would continue to advise Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty on restructuring the auto industry.

The move came on the eve of Saturday's announcement that Ottawa and Queen's Park are lending $4 billion to General Motors Canada and Chrysler Canada to keep the automakers afloat.

Federal insiders said yesterday the Conservative government never really saw eye-to-eye with Arnett on what needed to be done, and Ottawa has no immediate plans to look for a successor.

> **"We never came to terms, at least from the federal perspective."**
> High-ranking official

"We never came to terms, at least from the federal perspective," said a high-ranking official.

"As things have been changing at lightning speed, and as we already have retained accounting firms to go into the data rooms (to examine the automakers' books), I'm not sure we need a new special adviser just yet."

Instead, Ottawa will rely on internal advice on how GM, Chrysler and Ford can be made more competitive. That suggests Canada is unlikely to follow U.S. president-elect Barack Obama's lead and appoint an auto czar to oversee the companies.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Talks fail to end Ottawa transit strike

TIM WIECLAWSKI
Metro Canada

NEGOTIATIONS Ottawa city buses will stay parked today after weekend talks between the city and OC Transpo failed to produce an agreement that would have buses rolling again in the capital city.

Both sides have agreed to a media blackout, but city spokesman Mike Fitzpatrick said negotiations between the city and OC Transpo employees union will resume tomorrow.

Lengthy meetings with a federal mediator took place on Saturday and yesterday to resolve issues around wages, scheduling, sick leave and contracting out of work that led OC Transpo's 2,300 bus drivers, mechanics and dispatchers to go on strike 12 days ago.

Members of Amalgamated Transit Union local 279 had been working out of contract since last April.

On Dec. 3, the union rejected the city's penultimate contract offer by a vote of 98 per cent and gave their bargaining team a strike mandate.

Last-ditch efforts to resolve the impasse were unsuccessful and the buses have been parked since midnight Dec. 10.

For the first eight days of the strike, the two sides did not meet.

The stalemate was finally lifted on Thursday when Mayor Larry O'Brien and ATU international vice-president Randy Graham met and agreed that both sides would drop their pre-conditions for resuming talks.

News in brief

SHOOTING An Ontario man who was shot dead by police yesterday morning outside his father's apartment was bipolar and had battled mental illness for years. According to investigators, a 911 call to Peel police about 1 a.m. yesterday reported that a distraught male was yelling and throwing things off a fifth-floor balcony. Greg Moynagh, 25, was shot in the hallway after allegedly lunging at police officers. Investigators recovered two knives at the scene. The province's Special Investigations Unit, which probes all cases of serious injury or death involving police, is investigating. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Ontario **Lighting up the holidays**

PAWEL DWULIT/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The Williams family home in Pickering, Ont., has become quite the spectacle. Michael Williams rented a crane to take lights right to the top of five 15-metre trees in the front yard as the family won Pickering's best decorated home award for the fourth straight year.

$11 for chance to win a house

JEFF CUMMINGS
Metro Canada

PRIZE An Edmonton family, who has been renovating a four-bedroom house ever since it bought it, is hoping to give it up as a prize six months from now to someone looking for a home that's mortgage-free, completely renovated and ready to move in.

In order to pick the right homeowner, however, David Stockburger has challenged candidates to write essays or life stories on why they deserve to live in a mortgage-free home through the family's website at The11dollarhouse.com.

The submissions also include a $11 entry fee. Entries are being accepted until Feb. 15.

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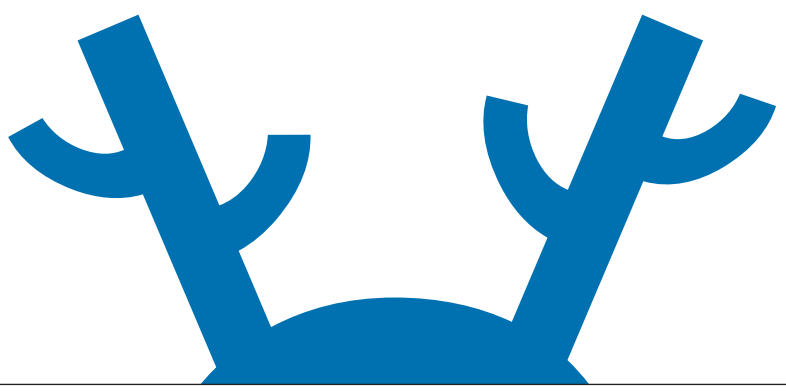

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Spaniards hoping for Christmas jackpot

People in Spain are anxiously awaiting the results for El Gordo ("the big one"), an annual Christmas lottery worth more than two billion euros. The winning numbers are scheduled to be announced today. METRO NEWS SERVICES

World

Man survives bird flu

A 19-year-old Cambodian man has survived the H5N1 bird flu virus, which has killed seven other people in the poor Southeast Asian nation since 2005, a health ministry official said yesterday. The youth, who became infected after eating dead poultry, was discharged from a Phnom Penh hospital Saturday after being treated for 10 days. REUTERS

PM hopefuls target Hamas

The two leading candidates to become Israel's next prime minister vowed yesterday to topple Hamas' government in the Gaza Strip, ratcheting up tensions after a six-month-old ceasefire ended in violence.

"In the long term, we will have to topple the Hamas regime. In the short term ... there are a wide range of possibilities, from doing nothing to doing everything, meaning to conquer Gaza."
Benjamin Netanyahu

The threats by Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and right-wing Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu followed a cabinet meeting in which outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert cautioned against rushing into a large-scale operation in the Hamas-ruled enclave in response to escalating rocket fire by militants.

Such an operation could result in heavy casualties on both sides, fuel a major humanitarian crisis in the aid-dependent Gaza Strip and spark an international outcry against Israel.

If elected premier in a Feb 10 election, Livni, who heads the centrist Kadima party, said her government's "strategic objective" would be to "topple the Hamas regime" using military, economic and diplomatic means. She did not set a timetable.

Netanyahu, Livni's main rival for the premiership, called for a more "active policy of attack," accusing the current government of being too "passive."

"In the long term, we will have to topple the Hamas regime. In the short term ... there are a wide range of possibilities, from doing nothing to doing everything, meaning to conquer Gaza," Netanyahu said.

Palestinian militants have fired nearly 60 makeshift rockets and mortar shells at Israel since the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire with Hamas ended Friday, the Israeli army said.

REUTERS

100 detained over car tariff protest in Russia

VIOLENCE Russian riot police detained at least 100 people yesterday protesting government measures linked to the economic crisis, a crackdown that highlighted official sensitivity to growing hardship.

Protests took place across Russia against car import tariffs, which are being raised to prop up car producers and discourage Russians from buying second-hand vehicles.

In the Pacific port city of Vladivostok, riot police broke up an unsanctioned rally organized against the duties, kicked a protester as he was being held and hurled a cameraman's gear to the ground.

Police used a loudspeaker to order demonstrators to go home as they gathered near the city centre, and riot police started snatching people after an uneasy 30-minute standoff.

Local media said 100 to 200 of the 500 participants were detained.

Russia's Far East is a major importer of used Japanese cars, and analysts say the protests are the first serious challenge by Russians to measures directly linked to the financial crisis.

REUTERS

Russia's struggles

- The global economic crisis has battered Russian financial markets, and oil, a chief source of foreign currency revenue, has plunged from $147 to below $40 per barrel in six months.

News in brief

CRASH Thirty-eight passengers were injured when a Boeing 737 airliner went off a runway and caught fire at Denver International Airport on Saturday night, Denver Aviation Manager Kim Day said.

LITERACY President Evo Morales declared Bolivia free of illiteracy Saturday after a three-year project sponsored by his leftist allies Cuba and Venezuela helped about 820,000 people learn to read and write.

PORN A Chinese woman who became an online sensation after posting a homemade pornographic film of herself on the Internet has been detained in Shanghai, according to state media. Pornography is illegal in China, though it is widely available on pirated DVDs and the Internet. REUTERS

Scotland **Remembering Pan Am Flight 103**

DAVID MOIR/REUTERS

Mourners embrace during a service at the Lockerbie disaster memorial garden at Dryfesdale Cemetery, in Lockerbie, Scotland. Yesterday marked the 20th anniversary of the bombing of a Pan Am jumbo jet flying from London to New York over the Scottish town that killed 270 people.

Greek opposition increases lead amid widespread unrest

POLITICS Greece's opposition Socialist party has stretched its poll lead to as much as six percentage points over the ruling Conservatives amid public discontent over the handling of the worst rioting in decades, surveys showed yesterday.

Anti-government protests have entered a third week since the Dec. 6 killing of a 15-year-old boy by police, but Greek citizens were split on whether the government should call snap elections.

The demonstrations have fed on anger at youth unemployment, pension reforms and an economic slowdown.

An opinion poll published by Kathimerini newspaper showed the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Party had 38.5 per cent of voters support compared to 32.5 per cent for the ruling New Democracy party.

The survey also showed 86 per cent of Greeks were critical of the government's handling of the violence. REUTERS

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Comment & Views

Comment

Pat on back for Christmas

HineSight

Anne Hines

I want everyone to stop for just a moment, think of something you did well today, or even just that you did. Getting out of bed counts. Getting out of bed prepared to try to make it through another day counts even more.

As a gift this Christmas, I'd like to offer readers two tips. One, as you elbow your way through stores searching for those final gifts, repeat this calming mantra: "I can always give everyone a cheque. I can always give everyone a cheque." And, as you contemplate all those little joys yet to be ticked off your list, the cooking, baking, getting your Prozac prescription refilled, my second piece of advice is this: At all costs, avoid behaving like me.

Yesterday, I finished writing a book. I don't mention this as a means of shameless self-promotion. Shameless self-promotion would be to say that the title is Parting Gifts: Notes on Loss, Love and Life; it's published by McArthur & Co., and that it will be available in fall '09. I would never stoop to that.

The point is, whenever I finish writing a book, I'm exhausted and muddled. I no longer know what the book is about. I'm not sure I care what the book is about. And, I'm feeling entirely unappreciated by my evil, evil publisher who won't let me have the one thing I need to make the book really good: Four more lifetimes to work on it.

I always announce to my partner, Liz, that I am never writing another book. Not if my life depends on it. Or, the life of the entire free world. Or even, say, if space aliens came to Earth and threatened to blow the place up, "Unless the Hines human dashes off 1,000 words on Why We Revere Space Aliens."

Instead, I dream of a job at Dairy Queen. Not only does dipping ice cream into chocolate seem like a greater service to the world, I suspect the pay is better.

There is one thing I never do when I finish a book. I don't pause, tell myself I'm an amazing being for having accomplished something and that no matter how good or bad the end result may be, the measure of success is simply to have tried.

So, in these final days before the holiday, don't be like me. I want everyone to stop for just a moment, think of something you did well today, or even just that you did. Getting out of bed counts. Getting out of bed prepared to try to make it through another day counts even more. Now, give yourself a gift for Christmas: A pat on the back.

Anne Hines is an author and humour writer. She has written three novels and one collection of nonfiction humour.

MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Transport at centre of stimulus debate

InTransit

Derek Moscato

dmoscato@yahoo.com

John Baird, Canada's Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, was in the Lower Mainland last week to collect funding wish lists from regional government leaders.

He and his boss, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, want to breathe some life into the national economy with major stimulus projects that will create jobs and bolster consumer confidence.

Not surprisingly, Baird's appearance on the West Coast attracted plenty of fanfare. And like toddlers at the mall lining up for their two minutes with Santa Claus, politicians and lobbyists were quick to make their respective cases for the loot presumably coming out of Ottawa.

It's hard to blame them. They are wise to the fact that amidst the bleeding from this financial crisis, there is unprecedented opportunity — opportunity to address Canada's "infrastructure deficit."

Previous economic disasters have given way to visionary enterprises. Local historian Chuck Davis points to the iconic Lions Gate Bridge, which was approved and built during the Great Depression, as an example.

While funding for Vancouver's most famous crossing came from the private sector — specifically the Guinness family of Irish beer fame — the need for jobs at the time overcame any objections to building a road through Stanley Park, and a bridge across Burrard Inlet.

Fast-forward to 2008, and bridges and roads are once again front-and-centre in the stimulus debate.

"Transit — especially well-funded, sprawling, rail-intensive transit — always trumps traffic. It also makes the most economic and environmental sense."

But while it's appropriate for transportation to be a spending priority — look no further than the stimulus plans being drafted up by U.S. president-elect Barack Obama — the focus here needs to be on rail-based public transit above all else.

In Metro Vancouver, three key rail projects — the Evergreen Line in the northeast, the SkyTrain extension to UBC, and rail expansion in Surrey — are all in need of federal government support.

There are also smaller but still-significant ventures being planned, such as the modernized False Creek streetcar known as the Olympic Line.

The return on investment for these plans has the potential to be huge, given this region's ongoing commuting crunch.

Vancouver can look to New York City for leadership in this regard.

A new report shows that during the Big Apple's population boom between 2003 and 2008, more new residents opted for public transit rather than an automobile when getting around.

Transit — especially well-funded, sprawling, rail-intensive transit — always trumps traffic. It also makes the most economic and environmental sense.

Are you listening, Minister Baird?

Derek Moscato is a writer with a focus on urban issues, transportation, architecture and economics.

Letters

Why knock Canadian constitutional monarchy?

Re: Are we a colony? (Dec. 16)

Enough already! Do we have to hear from every pompous pundit on the pros and cons of our constitutional monarchy form of government?

Is it out of sheer ignorance of how the system works, mean-spirited criticism, or simple lack of anything interesting to say, that people such as Mr. Martin keep bringing up the Queen and her representative, the Governor General, in relation to Harper's pathetic fiasco of the past few weeks?

Get over it, gentlemen. As Canada's head of state, the Queen and her Governor General function quite well as unbiased referees in constitutional and parliamentary controversies such as this.

JOHN TAGG, TORONTO

Let's not forget Canada was built by royalists

Re: Are we still a colony (Dec. 16).

Although Prime Minister Stephen Harper deserves to be criticized for manipulating the Governor General to prorogue the Parliament, Lawrence Martin's reference to former Ottawa Citizen editor Keith Spicer's comparison of Canada to Zimbabwe is uncalled for.

Both Martin and Spicer seem to have forgotten that the royalists transformed Canada from an overwhelmingly French-speaking country to an overwhelmingly English-speaking one.

As for the Governor General, let the Queen choose her own representative without any interference from the prime minister. This will allow him or her to act freely without being manipulated by the prime minister.

MAHMOOD ELAHI, OTTAWA

Out with the bullies, in with fair governance

It's time to get on with governing Canada in a fair and truly democratic way. This includes respect for minorities, women, the elderly, the poor and the working class. And, we need more generous, cogent and coherent policies to assist the poorest globally.

The Conservative government has offered very little of the above and has behaved like the schoolyard bully.

DR. ROBERT C. DICKSON, CALGARY

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: vancouverletters@metronews.ca

Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number – street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

Let the sunshine in
To cut heating energy and costs in winter, on sunny days open your south-facing drapes and let the sun in, according to SaskEnergy. The sun is a natural source of heat. If you have large windows that don't receive direct sun, keep the drapes closed. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Going Green

Holiday shopping tips

Some tips to go green this holiday season. Don't fear shopping at thrift stores. A thoughtful gift will mean more than an expensive gift. Stuck on sweaters or socks as gift ideas? Give an assortment of CFL light bulbs, or replace someone's old Christmas lights with energy saving LED lights. Reuse gift bags. Don't throw them out when they still look perfectly new. **NEWS CANADA**

EDITOR: MIKE DEREZYCKY, MIKE.DEREZYCKY@METRONEWS.CA

Here are a few bright ideas

Saving on your energy bills doesn't have to leave you in the cold this winter

MATTHEW DEFAVERI
Metro World News

A class at Oklahoma State University is working with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and spearheading a campaign around Earth Hour to raise awareness for energy conservation. The students shared some of their tips with Metro.

1 Use your ceiling fans, even in the winter. By reversing the fan blades to create an updraft (recirculating the hottest air near the ceiling through the rest of the room), you can save 10 per cent on heating in the winter. Heating costs for the winter in 2007 were $928 US on average. Saving 10 per cent on heating costs translates to $92.80, with a new cost of $835.20.

2 Make the switch to fluorescent light bulbs. If you use a 75-watt soft white normal bulb, you would get 121 hours of light for $1. An 18-watt fluorescent light bulb will net you 505 hours of light for $1. For the average household using 600 kilowatt-hours of electricity per month, roughly 10 per cent of that electricity is lighting. With 60 kWh spent on light bulbs, 75-watt normal bulbs are costing you $4.50/month and 18-watt fluorescent bulbs only cost you $1.08/month, for a savings of $3.42/month.

You would be surprised how many electrical appliances can be easily unplugged once you're done using them.

3 Save on drinking water — buy a water filter. Each person drinks roughly 115 litres of bottled water per year. One case of 24 half-litre bottles of water costs an average of $7 US. At 115 litres per person, that's almost 10 cases of water!

4 Unplug appliances when they aren't in use. You would be surprised how many electrical appliances can be easily unplugged once you're done using them. Things like colour TVs (313 watts), desktop computers (318 watts), microwaves (209 watts), or coffee makers (116 watts) are convenient enough to unplug. Even small things such as stereo systems and laptops (81 and 90 watts, respectively) can be unplugged to save on your utility bill. Spaceheating systems, while more inconvenient to unplug than a TV, guzzle an enormous 3,524 watts.

5 Air dry dishes instead of using drying cycles. The drying setting on a dishwasher sucks up as much as 512 watts. The average household uses its dishwasher roughly four times a week, so that's 2,048 watts, or 8,192 watts per month. At a rate of $0.11/kWh, you would save $0.90 per month per month air drying your dishes instead of using the drying setting on the dishwasher.

Making eco-friendly choices doesn't have to be difficult

Canadians want to do their part to protect the planet, but for some the thought of adopting a green lifestyle can be overwhelming.

Making environmentally-friendly choices doesn't have to be difficult. In fact, just a few small changes in your regular routine can significantly reduce your family's ecological footprint.

Encourage your family to help the environment by following these simple steps:

When wrapping a gift for that special someone, consider eco-friendly options. Wrap presents in reusable gift bags that can be used year after year or look for wrapping paper made out of recycled material.

Instead of buying traditional cleaners that release harmful toxins into the environment, use natural cleaning products such as those in the Green Works line. Green Works products are as effective as traditional cleaners, but they are 99 per cent natural and are formulated to be biodegradable. Information on these products is available online at www.greenworkscleaners.com.

Leave paper and plastic bags at home by packing a litterless lunch in reusable containers.

Take your own travel mug or thermos to the coffee shop. Many coffee houses offer a discount on your morning java if you bring your own container.

Carry groceries home in reusable shopping bags. If you must use plastic grocery bags, reuse them each time you go shopping.

Instead of tossing household clutter, host a garage sale to get rid of old clothes and household items. Donate items that don't sell to local charities, homeless shelters or clothing drives. Remember, one person's trash is another person's treasure.

NEWS CANADA

News in brief

POLITICS U.S. president-elect Barack Obama underscored Saturday his intent to push initiatives on climate change by naming John Holdren, an energy and climate specialist, as the new White House science adviser.

REUTERS

A diplomatic and economic gesture
China offered Taiwanese investors on the mainland $19 billion US in financing over the next three years. Ties between China and diplomatic rival Taiwan have warmed since Taiwanese president Ma Ying-jeou took office in May. REUTERS

Business

Working-class task force

U.S. president-elect Barack Obama unveiled a task force yesterday charged with helping struggling working families, as Obama also expanded his economic recovery plan to try to save three million jobs. The task force, to be headed by vice-president-elect Joe Biden, would aim to boost education and training. REUTERS

EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Holiday steals on stock market

Investors could do their holiday shopping on Wall Street this week as bargain-basement prices for stocks and optimism over efforts to fight the year-long recession may prompt a year-end rally.

But not even a Santa Claus rally to end the year can rescue 2008 from going into the books as the worst for stocks since the Great Depression, thanks to the housing market slump, credit crisis and, finally, recession.

With just seven trading days left, the benchmark S&P 500 index is down 39.5 per cent for the year, on pace perhaps to match Wall Street's second-worst year ever, 1937, when the S&P also plummeted nearly 39 per cent.

That said, the slump in stocks has left them relatively cheap. And analysts are now more optimistic that recession-fighting efforts such as the Federal Reserve's big interest-rate cuts may soon gain traction.

"You're getting a lot of people picking through the wreckage of this year and doing some selective buying. There are some good bargains out there."
Paul Nolte

"You're getting a lot of people picking through the wreckage of this year and doing some selective buying," said Paul Nolte, director of investments at Hinsdale Associates.

"There are some good bargains out there and there is a fair amount of buying in the marketplace."

REUTERS

France **Christmas trinkets for sale**

JACKY NAEGELEN/REUTERS

A woman sells Christmas decorations at a Christmas market in Colmar, France, yesterday.

Notice of Security Alarm System By-Law Regulations

If you own or possess a security alarm system within the city of Vancouver - Whether monitored or not - the following bylaw information applies to you:

Requirement for Alarm Permit
5. A person must not:
(a) install or place a security alarm system in a building, structure, or premises without first obtaining an alarm permit for such system under this By-law; or
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Fines
40. Every person who commits an offence against this By-law is punishable on conviction by a fine of not less than $100.00 and not more than $2,000.00 for each offence.

Fines for continuing offence
41. Every person who commits an offence of a continuing nature against this By-law is liable to a fine not exceeding $50.00 for each day such offence is continued.

Program Overview: In an effort to reduce false alarms, the City of Vancouver implemented Security Alarm Bylaw No. 7111 on July 5th, 1993. Under the Bylaw **a Permit is mandatory for any premise with an alarm system, whether monitored or not, within the City of Vancouver.** It is an alarm user's responsibility to purchase/renew an alarm permit annually. There are three classifications of Alarm Permits currently priced as follows: Residential - $17.55, Small Commercial (with premises less than 140 square metres in size) - $29.25, and Large Commercial with premises greater than 140 square metres in size) - $58.50.

For more information please contact:
The False Alarm Reduction Program
#165 – 555 W. 12th Avenue (City Square Mall), Vancouver, BC V5Z 3X7
Phone: (604) 871-6150 Fax: (604) 871- 6152
For more information about Security Alarm System Bylaw No. 7111,
please check out the City of Vancouver website at: www.vancouver.bc.ca

$4B for Chrysler, GM

BAILOUT A historic $4-billion lifeline to rescue General Motors and Chrysler in Canada is likely just the first instalment of public loans to the automakers, concedes Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The $4 billion represents about 20 per cent of the $17.4-billion US package announced for the two auto giants on Friday.

Ottawa is contributing $2.7 billion in loans, while Ontario is adding $1.3 billion.

GM and Chrysler in both countries will get some of the aid within days since they are close to running out of money for their operations.

Ford didn't receive loans because it didn't ask, said a spokesman for Industry Minister Tony Clement, but "when (if) Ford asks to be involved, the program is open to them."

He added that Ford would benefit from two separate programs announced by Harper: One to provide additional account receivable insurance coverage to automotive suppliers and the other to set up a facility for consumers.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE/REUTERS

Windsor credit union tries boosting auto sales

AUTOS A credit union in Windsor, Ont., says it is trying to loosen cash for consumers in an effort to spark vehicle sales in the reeling auto sector.

The Windsor Family Credit Union has created a cash pool of $5 million to finance new 2008 and 2009 models to eligible borrowers at four local dealers.

The move follows tightening standards for loans because of the worldwide credit crisis that has made it difficult for many consumers to buy a vehicle.

WFCU is offering loans at a low rate of five per cent for five years until the end of next March for eligible borrowers.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Tough times for casino operator

GAMBLING Steve Wynn towers over the Las Vegas Strip in commercials for his new Encore resort, but the growing recessionary slump in business along the fabled gambling corridor could soon bring the casino mogul down to earth.

Wynn Resorts Ltd. is today slated to open the $2.3-billion US, 2,000-room Encore, a curved tower of bronze glass that nearly mirrors the adjacent Wynn Las Vegas, the company's three-year-old luxury casino hotel.

Meanwhile, shares of Wynn Resorts have fallen about 66 per cent since February as the casino industry has grappled with tight credit markets and a downturn in gambling demand.

Encore will mark its debut at a time when crowds have thinned in Las Vegas, fewer private jets are rolling in and hoteliers are slashing rooms rates to attract as much foot traffic as possible.

REUTERS

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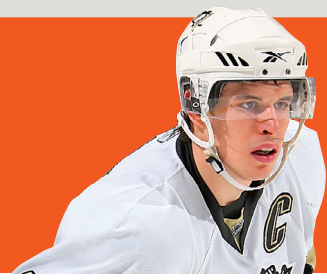
Bergeron released from hospital

Boston Bruins forward Patrice Bergeron, who missed most of last season with a concussion, was released from hospital yesterday after being diagnosed with another concussion. He was injured in Saturday's game against the Carolina Hurricanes. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports



Crosby blows away record

Sidney Crosby surpassed Jaromir Jagr's record for the most votes received by a player in NHL all-star game fan balloting yesterday. Crosby passed the 1,020,736-vote mark that Jagr set in 2000 while with the Penguins. Crosby's Penguins teammate Evgeni Malkin was also poised to top the record. There is still almost two weeks of voting remaining.

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Remember the '58 Bulls

JOHN CHICK
john.chick@metronews.ca

GREGORY SHAMUS/GETTY IMAGES

The Buffalo Bulls celebrate the MAC championship after defeating Ball State on Dec. 5. The win earned them a berth in the International Bowl in Toronto.

Fifty years sounds like a long time. To Willie Evans, it seems like yesterday.

The 1958 University of Buffalo Bulls football team went 8-1 and for the first time, received a coveted NCAA bowl invite. The Tangerine Bowl was an Orlando, Florida fixture back then. But there were other fixtures in U.S. south, and the leaseholders of the game told Buffalo the team would only be welcome if they came without their two black players — running back Evans and defensive end Mike Wilson.

"The fellows I played with did a remarkable job of drawing a line in the sand," Evans recounted last week.

That line in the sand was opting not to go. The coach left it up to the team to decide, and they unanimously rejected the invite.

"I wasn't surprised," said Evans. "But for the players to do what they did was remarkable."

Half a century later, the world has changed, sportwise and socially. A third NCAA bowl game will be played in Toronto Jan. 3 and an African American will be sworn in as president of the United States 17 days later.

This year's UB Bulls went 8-5, stunning Ball State in the Mid-American Conference title game to earn the International Bowl bid at the Rogers Centre. Having rejected the invite in 1958, it will be their first bowl appearance ever, facing the University of Connecticut.

Before the game, Evans and members of that golden anniversary team will be honoured.

"The word I would use is 'ecstatic,'" said UB athletic director Warde Manuel. "I'm excited for the '58 team, that they're going to have a bowl experience."

Evans meanwhile, who has spent 36 years with the school's alumni association, wants the focus on today's players.

"The tributes should be made to the current," said Evans. "We dealt with it, and we dealt with it extremely well."

Much of UB's recent success can be attributed to head coach and former CFL player Turner Gill.

That success has raised his stock on the NCAA coaching ladder, and last week NBA legend Charles Barkley accused his alma mater, Auburn University, of racism in passing over the African-American Gill in favour of former Iowa State coach Gene Chizik (for the record, Gill signed an extension to stay at Buffalo a day later). While Evans is happy Gill is staying put, he doesn't disagree with Barkley's opinion.

"I think it's apparent that the hiring of African-American coaches (in U.S. college football) is in need of improvement across the board," Evans said. Of 119 schools in the three levels of NCAA football, four have black head coaches.

"We've still got a way's to go, and I think that's reflective of what Charles Barkley said."

Canucks still need another piece

Now that Mats Sundin has proven the majority of us wrong by signing with the Canucks, what is this team missing to be mentioned with the Detroits and San Joses of the world?

Many optimists around the lower mainland would answer "Nothing," but the realists offer a different opinion. Certainly, Roberto Luongo's health is at the top of the list, with all due respect to Curtis Sanford and Cory Schneider. Assuming Luongo is able to play up to his ability once his groin allows him to suit up again, the biggest need appears to be a defenceman that can consistently create offense.

The Canucks' back end is very good, but elite NHL teams generally have a proven offensive defenceman that can quarterback a powerplay.

Vancouver's blue liners are capable of providing scoring on any given night, but there is no Nik Lidstrom or Dan Boyle in the group.

Finding a player of that ilk that is also attainable is like trying to find a parking spot at a mall right now; if you've got one, you're not letting it go. The rare exception is when a team is toiling near the bottom of the standings and has an expensive defenceman headed for free agency.

That player does exist in Atlanta, and one has to wonder if Mike Gillis has contacted the Thrashers to inquire about Mathieu Schneider's availability. Though he has been plagued by injuries for the past couple of seasons, Schneider consistently produces points and is excellent on the powerplay.

His $5.75 million salary would just fit into the Canucks' salary structure if they wait until the end of January to get him. Of course, this is nothing more than spit balling, and Gillis may believe that his blue line is just fine the way it is.

Make no mistake; if Sundin has the impact that he is expected to and Luongo is playing like Luongo, there is a legitimate case to be made for the Canucks knocking off either the Red Wings or the Sharks in a seven-game series. But that case would be a whole lot stronger with a proven scorer on the back end.

• It took an injury, but there will be a Vancouver Giant on Team Canada when the World Junior Tournament opens this Thursday in Ottawa.

Dana Tyrell's knee injury opened the door for Giants' sniper Evander Kane to get the call from Pat Quinn just days after Kane narrowly missed making the squad the first time around. Congratulations are also in order for Giants' defenceman Jonathan Blum, who has been named captain of the American entry at the tourney.

SCOREBOARD

NFL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Atlanta 24 Minnesota 17
Buffalo 30 Denver 23
Cincinnati 14 Cleveland 0
Miami 38 Kansas City 31
New England 47 Arizona 7
New Orleans 42 Detroit 7
Oakland 27 Houston 16
San Francisco 17 St. Louis 16
San Diego 41 Tampa Bay 24
Seattle 13 N.Y. Jets 3
Tennessee 31 Pittsburgh 14
Washington 10 Philadelphia 3
N.Y. Giants 34 Carolina 28

SATURDAY'S RESULT

Baltimore 33 Dallas 24

TONIGHT'S GAME

Green Bay at Chicago

NFL Holmgren, Favre finale

GETTY IMAGES

Seahawks coach Mike Holmgren is congratulated by Brett Favre after Seattle's 13-3 win yesterday. It was the last meeting between the two with Holmgren retiring at season's end. Holmgren coached Favre in Green Bay from 1992 to '99.

Titans clinch top spot in AFC

NFL Kerry Collins passed for 216 yards as the Tennessee Titans rattled off 21 unanswered points to seal home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs with a 31-14 victory over the Pittsburgh Steelers. The Titans (13-2) finished with 323 total yards in the win, becoming the first team this season to surpass the 300-yard mark against the vaunted Steelers defence.

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Students not staying in Kingston?

Kingston's mayor says the majority of Queen's University students surveyed by the city are pleased with their experience as Kingston citizens. However, a forthcoming Queen's study found that 78 per cent of students and alumni surveyed had not considered Kingston for post-graduate employment. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Workology

Gender gap on the rise

According to a new report, women will account for an average of 59 per cent of post-secondary education (PSE) students across the developed world by 2025. In Canada, there could be almost twice as many female students as male. In 2005, 58 per cent of PSE students in Canada were female, and that number is expected to rise to 64 per cent by 2025. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

It's all about the presentation

OddJobs

Diane Peters

When you're out shopping, your eyes pick out things on your list, the shapes and colours you like, and the sale tags.

Leslie Groves, a 33-year-old retail consultant — and gift-wrapping expert — from Brantford, Ont., sees a lot more. She's spent her entire professional life in stores and she knows how to transform the dingiest shop into something special, the most useless piece of junk into a display prop and the simplest gift into a showpiece when wrapped.

Last holiday season, she spent an entire day at Toronto's Holt Renfrew, wrapping gifts. She also runs a wrapping seminar at gift shows. She shows people how to choose the right colours, make 20 different kinds of bows, and cost out their materials.

She's also a whiz at inventing props for retail displays. "I can walk through the plumbing department at a hardware store and come up with some great ideas," she says. Using her home workshop, she converts discarded industrial wooden spools into lightweight display tables and wooden skids into little white picket fences.

Groves first started working in retail at age 13 — she cleaned the buckets in a flower shop. Eventually, she started arranging and got good enough to win awards for her designs.

She studied retailing at Humber College and, in 1998, she was hired by Humber to help it revamp its retail program. That project really reinforced a simple but important idea to her: "It's all based on the elements of design, it's just how you apply it," she says.

Leslie Groves runs a wrapping seminar at gift shows. She shows people how to choose the right colours, make 20 different kinds of bows and cost out their materials.

But many stores she saw at the time were too cluttered and their displays had no theme and a poor use of colour. But a lot of smaller retailers had no one to tell them this.

So in 1999, she launched Interior Elements as a home-based business, and got hired to do everything from revamp stores visually to training staff on point-of-sale systems and gift-wrapping.

Between doing demonstrations at gift shows, working in stores herself, running training programs, consulting with business owners and powering up her mitre saw, no two days are ever the same for Groves.

And while the experts say times will be tough for retail in the coming year, Groves thinks there will be plenty for her to do. "People are scaling down, and they need to be more effective with their visuals, and they'll need help with that," she says. "And there are still lots of businesses opening up."

Diane Peters once hawked magic pens at the Canadian National Exhibition. She's now a writer and part-time journalism instructor.

The Lowdown

Job title: Retail consultant/gift wrapping expert

Salary: As much or as little as you want, depending on how hard you work

Education/training: Experience in retail and a college diploma in retail merchandising

Best Part of the Job: "Everyone has a different niche, and they share what they know with me. I combine that with what I know and pass it on to my next client."

Worst Part of the Job: "Sometimes I'm too busy and I don't get to be at home with my daughter."

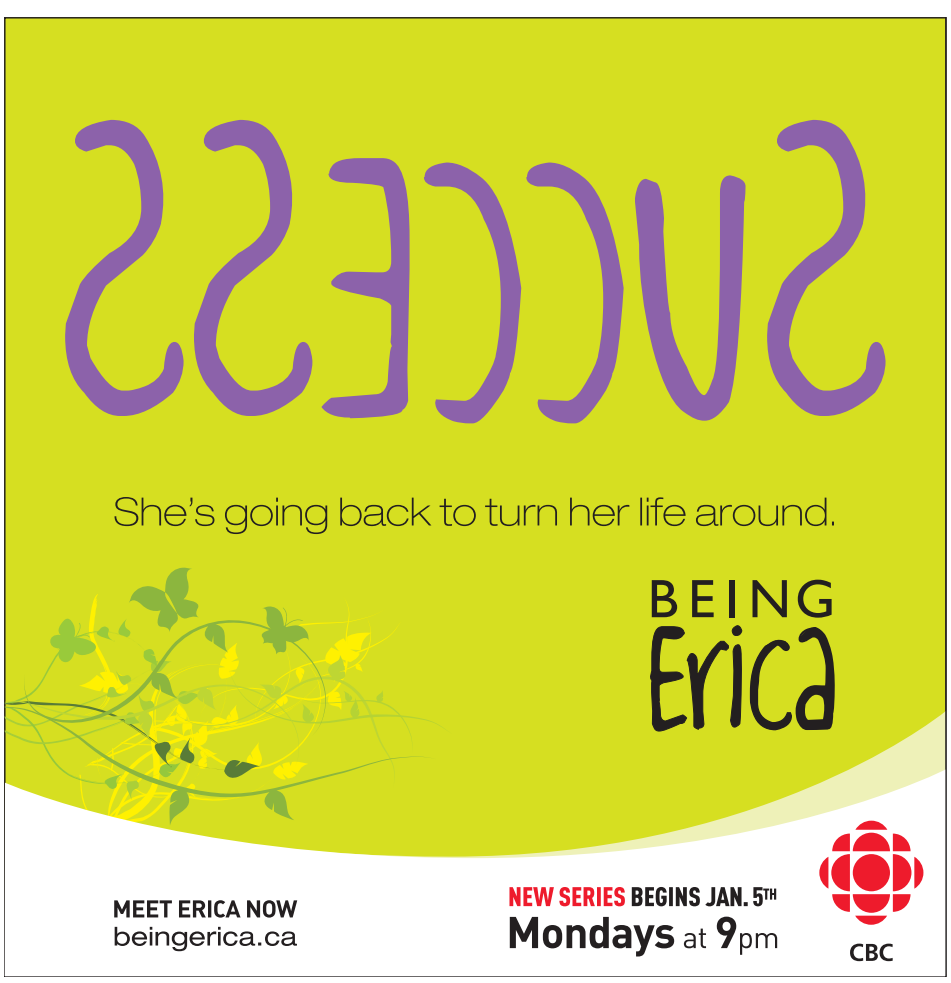
Employee retention a top priority

A recent survey suggests today's employers are most worried about hanging on to good employees and bringing in new ones, even in the current economy.

When asked about their greatest staffing concern, nearly four out of 10 (39 per cent) senior executives interviewed cited employee retention, while 22 per cent said recruitment. Productivity and employee morale were each named by 17 per cent of respondents.

The survey was developed by Robert Half International, the world's first and largest staffing services firm specializing in accounting and finance. It was conducted by an independent research firm.

"Many firms are operating with lean teams in which every staff member plays a key role in the business, making retention a greater concern," said Max Messmer, chairman and CEO of Robert Half International. METRO NEWS SERVICES



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PETA opts for Oprah

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals has named Oprah Winfrey its Person of the Year. The group singled out the media mogul for using her "powerful voice to defend those without one." PEOPLE.COM

Entertainment

Chace's chance

Chace Crawford is adding another role to his resumé. The Gossip Girl heartthrob will star in singer Leona Lewis' video for her next single, I Will Be.

IMDB.COM

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Bedtime a dream for Toronto-born producer

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

Movie **feature**

Toronto-born producer Andrew Gunn has managed to carve a nice little niche for himself in Hollywood.

He founded Gunn Films with Walt Disney Studios in 2000 and has made a career out of producing live action family films like Sky High and Freaky Friday that appeal to a wider audience than most preschool centric Disney fare.

His latest project brings Adam Sandler to Disney for Bedtime Stories, in which Sandler plays a man who invents fantasy stories for his niece and nephew only to see some elements of the stories come to life.

Sandler is normally involved in creating his screenplays, but this was one of the rare instances in which the studio brought the project to him.

"We did about three or four drafts of the script and hired the director," says Gunn. "Everybody thought that Adam could be great so we sent (the script) to him and were surprised to find out that he was into it. I think now that he's a dad he wanted to do something for his kids."

Of course once Sandler came on board he immediately went out of his way to make the movie his own.

"Adam brought in [screenwriter] Tim Hirlihy who he's known since the old days at SNL and they did a couple passes on the script," said Gunn. "It was Adam and Tim who thought to make each story different and set one in Rome, one in the wild west, one in outerspace and that sort of thing. There are actor/producers who aren't normally that involved, but Adam is intimately involved in every aspect of the movie from the casting to the music. He knows what he does very well and at a certain point you just have to trust in him and let him work."

Adam Sandler stars in the family film Bedtime Stories.

The result is a film that plays to children, but also has Sandler distinct comedic tone and a variety of his regular cast members. One surprising casting choice came in the form of controversial comedian Russell Brand, who fit into the family film quite well.

"Russell has the ability to even take a line without a joke in it and make it funny. There's nothing funnier than seeing him next to two nine year old kids. There's something very wrong with that picture."

Bedtime Stories opens Christmas Day in theatres across Canada.

Box office

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday:

1. **Yes Man** $18.2 million US
2. **Seven Pounds** $16 million
3. **The Tale of Despereaux** $10.5 million
4. **The Day the Earth Stood Still** $10.2 million
5. **Four Christmases** $7.7 million
6. **Twilight** $5.2 million
7. **Bolt** $4.3 million
8. **Slumdog Millionaire** $3.2 million
9. **Australia** $2.3 million
10. **Quantum of Solace** $2.2. million

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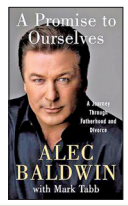
Baldwin a forgotten father

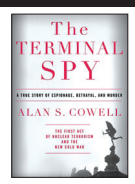


A Promise to **Ourselves**

Author: Alec Baldwin
Publisher: H.B. Fenn
Price: $27.95 (Hardcover)

Comedic actor Alec Baldwin puts on his tragedy mask to tell his side of his recent divorce and custody battle in A Promise to Ourselves, his memoir on fatherhood. Baldwin aims to transcend tabloids and offer a personal account of the psychological, emotional and legal struggles he faced during his divorce from L.A. Confidential actress Kim Basinger in 2002. Using reminiscence about his ex-wife and expression of distress over the fight for their daughter Ireland, Baldwin bares all. Though at times heavy on details and introductions, the memoir still relays Baldwin's feelings and undisguised criticism of the American legal system.

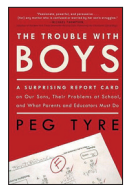
BookPicks



The Terminal **Spy**

Author: Alan S. Cowell
Publisher: Doubleday Canada
Price: $32.00 (Hardcover)

British journalist and Pulitzer Prize nominee Alan S. Cowell walks through what he calls "the first act of nuclear terrorism" in his thorough account, The Terminal Spy: A True Story of Espionage, Betrayal and Murder. When subversive Russian writer Alexander Litvinenko was poisoned with radioactive polonium, Cowell was there. He recalls his reporting on the case for the New York Times and international journalism to assemble Litvinenko's case and examine other plots to kill him. Cowell makes a case for what repercussions the largely unpunished crime may have.



The Trouble with **Boys**

Author: Peg Tyre
Publisher: Crown
Price: $27.95 (Hardcover)

Is it safe to conclude that boys will be boys? Not so, according to Pulitzer Prize winning New York journalist Peg Tyre. She travels back as early as pre-school, pinpointing numerous problem areas in schools that contribute to the detriment of the developing male. Tyre tries to make clear where we are going wrong and what can be done to save the state of boys.

BRIAN COULTON/FOR METRO CANADA

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IntelleVision

GlobalStyle

VA	Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 12/22/08	251	308	3 CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Pooh	Stuart McLean	The Border "Going Dark" (N)		CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
	255	358	6 JOY	Tube Tales	TV Made	Name Is Earl	How I Met	Momma's Boys (N) (CC)				News (N)
	254	-	8 M	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Omni News: Mandarin Edition		News: Cantonese Edition		Omni News: Punjabi Edition		Metropia
	250	321	9 CTV	Corner Gas	Hollywood	Shrek	Corner Gas	Would Be Kings (2008) (Part 2 of 2) Currie Graham, Ben Bass.				News (N)
	-	-	10 OMNI	The Daily	Frasier (CC)	Stargate SG-1 "Enigma"		One Tree Hill (CC)		Scrubs (CC)	Randall Mark	New Day
	252	336	11 GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	House "Not Cancer" (CC)		Prison Break (N) (CC)		Painkiller Jane (CC)		News (N)
	256	389	12 VI	Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		Gossip Girl (CC)		Women of Karaoun (CC)		Stargate Atlantis		News (CC)
	253	359	13 CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Holiday Home Video		Rita Rocks	Friends (CC)	Herbie (CC)		EP Daily
	-	-	14 CW	Deal-No Deal	Deal-No Deal	Gossip Girl (CC)		One Tree Hill (CC)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
	289	381	15 CBS	Entertainment	The Insider	Big Bang Th	How I Met	Two/Half Men	Worst Week	CSI: Miami (CC)		News (N)
	287	379	16 NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	2008: Today Looks Back		Momma's Boys (N) (CC)				News (N)
	602	568	19 W	Friends (CC)	Will & Grace	Confidential	Maxed Out	The Road to Christmas (2006) Jennifer Grey, Clark Gregg.				Maxed Out
	288	380	21 ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Shrek	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory ★★★ (2005, Fantasy) Johnny Depp. (CC)					KOMO 4 News
	-	-	23 KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	True Heart ★★ (1997) Kirsten Dunst, Zachery Ty Bryan.				King	Still Standing	Scrubs (CC)
	291	383	27 PBS	Steves Europe	Antiques	Antiques Roadshow (CC)		Great Performances (CC)				Kitka-Davka
	290	382	28 FOX	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	House "Not Cancer" (CC)		Prison Break (N) (CC)		News (N) (CC)		Family Guy
	-	364	43 PBS	(6:00) American Experience		Keeping Up	Being Served	Tavis Smiley	Charlie Rose (N) (CC)		Antiques Roadshow (CC)	
	296	654	34 SBK	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	South Park	Cheers (CC)	Half & Half	The Insider	Entertainment	Paid Program
	298	653	35 TLA	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Gossip Girl (CC)		One Tree Hill (CC)		KTLA Prime News (CC)		Friends (CC)
	295	651	36 WGN	WGN News at Nine (N) (CC)		Family Guy	Two/Half Men	According-Jim	Sex and-City	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	My Wife-Kids
	297	652	37 WPX	PIX News at Ten Tong. (N)		Two/Half Men	Friends (CC)	Sex and-City	According-Jim	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Odd Couple
	199	311	76 STR	News (N)	News		Late Show-Letterman		(:37) The Biggest Loser: Families (CC)			Will & Grace
news	502	390	26 NW	Prince William & Harry		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National		Prince William & Harry		National
	500	500	33 CNN	Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)				Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)		Cooper 360
sports	407	419	22 RSP	NHL Hockey Anaheim Ducks at Vancouver Canucks. (Subject to Blackout)					Sportsnet	Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet
	400	400	30 TSN	NFL Football: Packers at Bears			SportsCentre (Live) (CC)		Madden	2008 World Series of Poker		SportsCentre
	411	457	49 OLN	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman (CC)		Man Tracker (CC)		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman
	410	403	54 SCR	WWE Monday Night Raw		(:15) Score Tonight		WWE Monday Night Raw (CC)				Cabby Unlimit
	417	406	55 SC	Barrett-Jackson		Car Crazy	Pass Time	SuperCars	SuperCars	Car	Car	Auctions
	416	409	144 GLF	Fútbol Español		Gol TV News		Ole: La Liga		Paid Program	Kings Club	Gol TV News
family	552	543	25 YTV	A Miser Brothers' Christmas		Year Without a Santa Claus		Jack Frost ★★ (1998) Michael Keaton, Kelly Preston.				Mystery Hnt.
	555	545	50 TEL	Foster-Claus	6teen "Snow Job"		The Side Show Christmas		Futurama	American Dad	Chicken	Life's a Zoo
	557	541	51 FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	553	546	56 TRE	A Very Fairy Christmas		Franklin	Babar (CC)	Backyard	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Comfy Couch
cable variety	268	354	5 KNO	Undersea	Landscape	History of Britain: Nations		In Search of the Brontes		From Russia, For Love		Haida Art
	575	583	20 CMT	Donner Down	The Gift	All Through the Night		George Canyon's Christmas Videos				Christmas
	570	580	24 MM	50 Cent: Money and Power		50 Cent: Money and Power		MuchNews: Misses, Kisses		MuchOnDemand (CC)		Spring
	600	564	29 H&G	Income Prop.	House	Holmes on Homes (CC)		Property	Marriage	Income Prop.	My First Place	Home to Stay
	615	520	31 A&E	Runaway	Manhunters	Manhunters	Manhunters	Intervention "Derek" (CC)		Intervention "Nicole" (CC)		Runaway
	628	584	32 SPKE	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		UFC 92 Countdown (N)		CSI: NY (CC)		Star Trek: Voyager (CC)		Deep Space 9
	521	560	34 TLC	Jon & Kate Plus 8 (CC)		Little People	Little People	Jon & Kate	Jon & Kate	Jon & Kate Plus 8 (CC)		Little People
	616	522	39 SHO	The Christmas Choir (2008) Jason Gedrick, Rhea Perlman.				Kenny-Spenny	Rent-A-Goalie	Name Is Earl	Name Is Earl	Name Is Earl
	620	523	40 BVO	Dance Atlantic	Dance Me	Law & Order "Dissonance"		Without a Trace "Gung-Ho"		Frogs for Snakes ★★ (1998, Suspense) (CC)		
	601	562	41 SLC	Tim Gunn's Guide to Style		ET Canada	Matchmaker	Tim Gunn's Guide to Style		Trading Spouses		Biggest Loser
	520	505	42 DIS	Verminators (CC)		Daily Planet (CC)		Dirty Jobs "Micro Algae Man"		Verminators (CC)		MythBusters
	522	506	44 HIS	NCIS "Deception" (CC)		Battle 360 (CC)		Underworld Histories (CC)		NCIS "Deception" (CC)		Crime Stories
	627	528	45 SPC	Eureka (CC)		Stargate SG-1 "Need" (CC)		Lost "Par Avion" (CC)		Star Trek: Deep Space Nine		Star Trek
	294	650	47 TBS	Name Is Earl	Name Is Earl	Friends (CC)	Funniest Movies-2008		Sex and-City	Sex and-City	Steel Magnolias ★★★ (1989)	
	619	525	48 TROP	TV Made	Very Bad Men (CC)		What	Make	TV Made	Planet Soap	Reality	Final 24 (CC)
	603	561	52 FN	Kitchen Nightmares (CC)		Restaurant Makeover (CC)		12 Days of Cookies (CC)		Good Eats	Ace of Cakes	Nightmares
	626	547	57 COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs (CC)		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Jeff Dunham Christmas Special		
	320	621	60 CEN	Citizen Duane	Prom Wars (2008, Comedy) Ricky Ullman. (CC)			Brotherhood (CC)		Disturbia ★★ (2007) Shia LaBeouf. (CC)		
	581	566	101 MTV	The Hills	The Hills Live After Show		MTV Live	Mom & Dad	The Hills	The Hills	The Hills Live After Show	
	261	394	102 V	(6:00) A Holiday for Love ★★		Celtic Angels at Christmas		A Holiday for Love ★★ (1996, Drama) Melissa Gilbert. (CC)				Paid Program
	-	-	109 MUL	Matchmaker	Mom's-Upset	It Will Be Difficult to Love		Marimar		Pinoy: That's Entertainment		Patrol World

critics'corner

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

This is a really freaky version of the book, and if you have a phobia of dentists or big teeth, avoid it at all costs. If, however, you're like us and appreciate young Freddie Highmore, grab some popcorn. He stars as Charlie, a poor boy who wins a trip to see the inside of a mysterious candymaker's — played by a deathly pale Johnny Depp — factory. If you saw the 1971 version, you'll be happy to know no chickens were beheaded in this 2005 remake. 8:30 PM on ABC

Stuart McLean's Vinyl Cafe Christmas Pageant

The host of the popular radio show "The Vinyl Cafe" takes his act to television in this holiday special, in which he relates his determination to put on a holiday pageant for the people of Belleville, Ont., whether they like it or not. How does it turn out? Well, let's just say the term "comedy of errors" comes to mind. 8:30 PM on CBC

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Better late than never

Jessica Alba and her husband of seven months, Cash Warren, threw a long-overdue wedding reception on the weekend at their Beverly Hills home, according to usmagazine.com. The couple married last May and has a 6-month-old daughter. **EONLINE.COM**

Celebrity Buzz

Madonna ready to adopt again?

CHILDREN Madonna is reportedly moving ahead with plans to adopt another child from Malawi.

According to Star magazine, the singer is reportedly heading to the African nation — with new pal Alex Rodriguez in tow — to retrieve now 4-year-old girl Mercy James, even though Malawian adoption suggested that the singer's divorce from director Guy Ritchie would make the planned adoption impossible.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Lohan: Please save Sam's Facebook

PEOPLE Lindsay Lohan is upset that her rumoured girlfriend Samantha Ronson's Facebook profile was deleted, much like Lohan's was recently.

To remedy the situation, the Mean Girls actress took to her MySpace blog of all places to get the word out.

"Please put hers back exactly the way it was as you guys at Facebook did for mine," Lohan wrote.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

'Lonely' Nicole finds love with hubby

MARRIAGE Nicole Kidman was a "lonely" woman when she met Keith Urban, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The 41-year-old actress — who gave birth to Sunday Rose, her first child with husband Keith, in July — was tired of being unlucky in love before she was introduced to country singer Keith.

Nicole, who is divorced from Tom Cruise, said: "My husband Keith is the most important person in my life, and I am for him. We were two lonely people who met at a time when we could open ourselves up to each other.

"We were a mixture of brave and frightened. Since getting married, I have passed up a lot of projects. I don't want to be away from the person I love. Home is in my husband's arms."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Strip dancing has complexity: Tomei

ACTING Marisa Tomei has done her fair share of nude scenes, but even she was somewhat wary of dancing around in a G-string — and nothing else — in her role as a stripper opposite Mickey Rourke, in The Wrestler, people.com reports

"I didn't really want to be topless in every single dance number ... but there were certain things called for in the plot, and then I wanted to feel comfortable as her and I wanted it to be flattering."

So how did Tomei get into character? Research.

"I talked to a bunch of different girls and a bunch of different dancers. We just went out, had some drinks, went to a bunch of clubs, watched a lot of dances, got some dances," she says.

"It's like anything, any subculture. You get in there, and it's all individuals. And the dancing itself is not tawdry to the dancer and there's a lot more complexity there than you'd think."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Vaughn to ring in 2009 with a ring?

RELATIONSHIP Looks like Vince Vaughn could welcome in 2009 with a wife-to-be, msn.com reports.

According to In Touch magazine, the 38-year-old is planning to pop the question to squeeze Kyla Weber, a Canadian real estate agent, over New Year's.

A pal of the actor's tells the mag he's already selected a 4-carat-plus engagement ring with an estimated price tag of $125,000 US. "Vince is ready to get married and has been for a while," says the buddy. "He wants to start a family."

Vaughn confirms he's off the market but, perhaps having learned a thing or two from his tabloid-bait, wedding rumour-crammed romance with Jennifer Aniston, offers few details. "I don't talk much about private matters," he informs USA Today. "But I am in a very happy, serious, committed relationship."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Robbie would ruin Take That reunion: Lily

PEOPLE Lily Allen thinks Take That would be "ruined" if Robbie Williams rejoined the group, femalefirst.co.uk says.

The singer — who has approached the group to record a track with her — will be furious if the star is reunited with the band he left in 1995.

Speaking about rumours Robbie will return to Take That: "That's not going to happen. Do you think they will get him back? That would ruin it. I love Take That."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Legend an Obamaniac

POLITICS Singer John Legend was so confident president-elect Barack Obama would be heading to the White House after last month's election, he hired the VIP suite of a hotel for friends to celebrate in, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

"We had the TV set up, had a bunch of drinks set up. We were just hoping we had something to celebrate. And we did," he says.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Adoption an option if I'm infertile: Hough

PEOPLE Country singer Julianne Hough isn't fazed by the possibility she may be infertile after her recent bout of endometriosis — insisting she'd adopt if she can't have children of her own, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The star was hospitalized during the current season of the TV talent show, and doctors discovered a growth outside her womb.

Specialists insist she should still be able to have kids, but she says she's happy to find an alternative: "The doctor said I should be okay. But if I was unable to conceive, I'd adopt."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Clay expecting second child

CHILDREN Former American Idol star Clay Aiken is expecting another child.

Aiken's friend, music producer Jaymes Parker, who acted as a surrogate for Aiken's first child, 4-month-old Parker, is pregnant again and is due in August 2009, according to Babble.com.

Sources said that Aiken and Parker wanted to give their son a younger sibling as soon as possible

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Wednesday Flurries 70% 1°/ -4°

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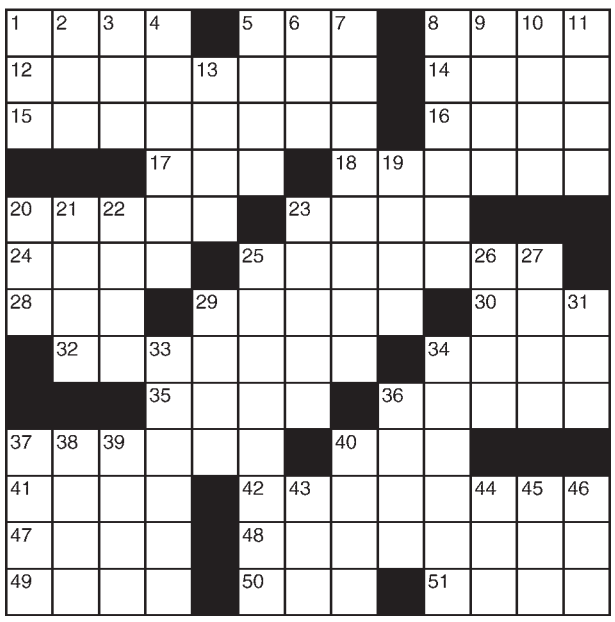
Take Five



Crossword across

1 Castle protection
5 Help
8 Paper quantity
12 Acquire by ingenuity
14 Sicilian volcano
15 Passenger's confiner
16 Loony
17 That man's
18 Wind musician
20 Pains' mates
23 From the start
24 Duo
25 Compulsive cleaner
28 Bygone days, once
29 Our planet
30 Bill
32 Pasty
34 Sandwich shop
35 Architect Mies van der —
36 Ready for battle
37 Not destroyed
40 "CSI" evidence
41 Bedouin
42 Long high-temp stretch
47 Reiner or Lewis
48 Cuba, Jamaica, etc.
49 Advertise greatly
50 Red or Black
51 Collections

Crossword down

1 Wrong (Pref.)
2 Inseparable
3 Actress Gardner
4 Leash
5 Census statistics
6 Under the weather
7 Set off an explosion
8 Fame
9 Needle case
10 Picnic intruders
11 Sail support
13 Wading bird
19 "Little Women" woman
20 Gorilla
21 Tranquil
22 Stash
23 Eagle's nest
25 Petroleum-like liquids
26 Particular
27 Hardy cabbage
29 British prep school
31 Auction offer
33 Fit for use as farmland
34 Speaks slowly
36 Con
37 Apiece
38 Picture of health?
39 Rainout cover
40 Information
43 Away from WSW
44 Brewery product
45 Animal doc
46 Ar follower

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	3						1	
	7	8		5		6	2	
6			9		7			5
		2	1		4	9		
		9	5		8	4		
3			2		5			6
	1	4		6		7	5	
	8						9	

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

D	A	S	H	■	E	T	A	L	■	E	T	A		
R	I	L	E	■	U	R	G	E	■	M	A	N		
I	D	O	L	■	R	A	R	E	■	I	L	K		
P	E	E	L	■	E	Y	E	■	I	T	C	H		
■	■	■	O	A	K	■	E	P	A	■	■	■		
F	A	J	I	T	A	■	D	A	M	P	E	R		
A	G	A	T	E	■	■	P	A	I	N	T	■		
D	O	R	S	A	L	■	R	E	C	E	D	E		
■	■	■	M	M	E	■	E	R	A	■	■	■		
J	O	V	E	■	S	O	T	■	M	O	M	S		
A	B	E	■	E	S	P	Y	■	E	D	I	T		
M	O	I	■	V	E	E	P	■	R	O	S	A		
B	E	N	■	A	N	N	E	■	A	R	T	Y		

3	7	4	2	1	9	8	6	5
5	1	8	6	7	4	3	2	9
2	6	9	8	5	3	7	4	1
7	4	5	9	6	8	1	3	2
1	8	2	4	3	7	9	5	6
6	9	3	5	2	1	4	7	8
9	3	6	7	8	5	2	1	4
4	5	1	3	9	2	6	8	7
8	2	7	1	4	6	5	9	3

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SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min Genius
13-17 min Scholar
17-21 min Smart
21-25 min Not bad
25+ min Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Flank Steak with Balsamic Sauce

INGREDIENTS:
1/3 cup (75 mL) orange juice
1/4 cup (50 mL) balsamic vinegar
1 tsp (5 mL) Worcestershire sauce
1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped fresh thyme
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt, or to taste
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 1/2 pounds (700 g) flank steak, trimmed
2 tbsp (25 mL) finely chopped large shallot
1 tsp (5 mL) olive oil
2 tsp (10 mL) unsalted butter

METHOD:
1. In small bowl, whisk orange juice, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, thyme, garlic, salt and pepper. Place steak in a shallow glass dish, pour on orange juice mixture and turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, turning several times.
2. Remove steak from marinade and pour marinade into small saucepan. Add shallot and set aside. Brush ridged grill pan or heavy skillet with oil and place over medium-high heat. Add steak to pan and, depending on thickness, cook for 6 to 7 minutes per side, or until it reaches the desired doneness. Transfer to cutting board and let stand for 5 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, bring marinade to a boil over medium-high heat and cook until reduced to 1/3 cup (75 mL), 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat, add butter and whisk until melted.
4. Slice steak thinly across grain. Add any accumulated juices on cutting board to sauce and serve with the steak. One serving is 3 oz (85 g) steak and 1 tbsp (15 mL) sauce.

SERVES 6

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Learn to enjoy spending time alone. Smiling at your troubles will be endearing. Take the high road in questions of integrity.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
A wimpy guy will slow down negotiations. Check the expiry date on fridge foods. A thoughtful person tells a little lie.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Peculiar ideas are viewed with alarm. A toy brings back some memories. A busybody will often be ignored.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Everything you do will be rewarding. A tall man has a weighty problem. A former associate must pay money back.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
Turn the other cheek in a conflict. Someone's retreat shows profound hurt. Say goodbye to a foolish notion

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Don't let hurt feelings block a conversation. A relative's whining will grate on your nerves. Someone is caught up in a frenzy.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
A younger person will jump at the chance to visit. A scrawny guy teaches a valuable lesson. An interesting remark will affect your future.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Someone is having sweet dreams of you. Someone else is stuck at home. Too much silence can get aggravating.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
An associate settles down after a snit. Give thanks where it's due. A do-gooder is preoccupied with giving good advice.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
News of a significant event gives good cheer. A victorious friend wants to celebrate. A family matter will be resolved fairly.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
A sensitive male will refuse to bow down Listen carefully when a girl speaks. Get a grip on your self-control.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
A computer glitch is baffling. Be quiet and purposeful when taking action. You'll find your way through a thicket of evasion.

WORDY GURDY®

BY TRICKY RICKY KANE

Every answer is a rhyming pair of words (like FAT CAT and DOUBLE TROUBLE), and they will fit in the letter squares. The number after the definition tells you how many syllables in each word.

1. Sway a vet to sleep in a cradle (1)
2. Cain's mom's fall color changers (1)
3. Add a hue to a broken-finger brace (1)
4. Butterfly cousin's fabrics (1)
5. One who lauds a surgical beam (2)
6. "Star Wars" knights' night flights (2)
7. Actress Debra's brandy cocktails (2)

12-22-08

ANSWERS
1. ROCK DOC 2. EYES LEAVES 3. TINT SPLINT 4. MOTHS CLOTHS
5. LASER PRAISER 6. JEDIS REDEYES 7. WINGERS STINGERS

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